

(Dis)Integrated Safety

Normalising Change through Quality

Since the dawn of the Industrial Age, technology has changed the way we work. The digital revolution of the last several decades has helped accelerate that change.

A few years ago, following the recent global financial crisis, I picked up a book that I thought might inspire some new thinking. Its title – *Out of the Crisis* – certainly resonated even though the book had been around a while. Written in 1982 by William Edwards Deming, it argued that for organisations to succeed they needed only two things: commitment and an openness to new thinking.

Deming, considered by many as the ‘father of Quality’, articulated 14 principles for management to follow in order to significantly transform the quality and the effectiveness of their business. Let’s recap them here:

1. *Adopt a new philosophy: We are in a new economic age, management must awaken to the challenge, learn their responsibilities and take on leadership for change.*
2. *Create constancy of purpose towards improvement of products and services, with the aim to become competitive and to stay in business. Decide to whom top management is responsible.*
3. *Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection on a mass basis by building quality into the product in the first place.*
4. *End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag.*
5. *Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity, and thus continuously decrease costs.*
6. *Institute training on the job.*
7. *Institute clear leadership. The aim of supervision is to help people and machines and gadgets to do a better job.*
8. *Drive out fear so that everyone may work effectively and efficiently.*
9. *Break down any and all barriers between departments.*
10. *Eliminate slogans and targets for the workforce asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity. These only create adversarial relationships.*
11. *Eliminate work quotas on the factory floor. Eliminate management by numbers and numerical goals.*
12. *Remove barriers that rob the hourly worker of his right to pride of workmanship.*
13. *Institute a vigorous programme of education and self-improvement*
14. *Put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation. Transformation is everybody’s job.*

Over 30 years after they were written, Deming’s principles are even more relevant today than they were back then. Nowadays, in a world where change is the new normal and business transformation is core to survival, these 14 points offer a clear framework for success. And what’s more, they provide us not just with guidance on improving quality, but also help us to create a robust roadmap for driving sustainable workplace safety improvements and building a robust organisational culture. What do you think? ■



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